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The President's Daily Brief

February 20, 1974

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

February 20, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Prime Minister Meir will not ask President Katzir to renew her mandate to form a new government when that mandate expires today. She apparently hopes thus to force a quick end to the political deadlock. (*Page 1*)

King Husayn is under pressure from the royal family to remove Prime Minister Rifai and Army Chief of Staff Bin Shakir. (*Page 3*)

Egon Bahr is going to Moscow this week to prepare the ground for a visit by Chancellor Brandt in the spring. (*Page 4*)

In Japan, the abrupt replacement yesterday of Vice Foreign Minister Hogen reflects Prime Minister Tanaka's growing difficulty in containing intraparty criticism on foreign policy issues. (*Page 5*)

Notes on Libya, the Japanese space program, and the EC appear on *page 6*.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ISRAEL

Prime Minister Meir will not ask President Katzir to renew her mandate to form a new government when that mandate expires today. She apparently hopes to force a quick end to the political deadlock. If she fails, the President must begin consultations to find another party leader to attempt to form a government.

Mrs. Meir probably believes that the Alignment has gone as far as it can in meeting the National Religious Party's demands for joining the new cabinet. She apparently sees no point in extending the coalition talks for another three weeks, as allowed by law.

Over the weekend, Alignment negotiators made concessions to the National Religious Party on both the conversion to Judaism issue and the Jordanian West Bank question. The Alignment bowed to the National Religious Party's demand that the guidelines of the new government explicitly state that any territorial proposal concerning the West Bank would require new national elections.

The National Religious Party, however, wants to obtain rabbinical approval of the Alignment's compromise proposals, and the party's youth wing insists that the party's central committee must give its assent when it meets on February 24.

The net effect is to delay a final decision until after Mrs. Meir's current mandate expires. She may hope that her stand not to request an extension will force the National Religious Party to make a decision now.

Mrs. Meir still prefers to continue the coalition with the National Religious Party and the Independent Liberal Party that held power before the December election. If agreement with the National Religious Party cannot be reached, however, she may have to choose from among several other options, all of which are more or less distasteful to her.

These include a broad coalition with the right-wing Likud bloc, a narrow coalition with the liberal parties, a minority Alignment government, stepping down as Alignment party leader, or agreeing to a call for new national elections.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The Alignment's party leadership appears divided over how to proceed if the current deadlock cannot be broken. Defense Minister Dayan leans toward a broad coalition with the Likud; other party leaders are more inclined to support a narrow coalition with the Independent Liberal Party and the new Civil Rights Party, leaving the door open for the National Religious Party to join later. Labor party leaders strongly want to avoid new elections.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Dayan yesterday reportedly told members of his Rafi faction within the Alignment that he would not serve in the next cabinet. He cited as reasons for his decision the criticism of him within the Alignment and the agreement not to form an emergency cabinet, presumably one which would include the Likud.

Apparently, Dayan has not withdrawn his support for the present caretaker government and will stay on as defense minister.

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JORDAN

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King Husayn is under pressure from the royal family to remove Prime Minister Rifai and Army Chief of Staff Bin Shakir. They are the focus of much of the resentment that surfaced during the recent army mutiny.

Their dismissal would help ease discontent among junior officers and enlisted men, and would satisfy a number of higher level critics among the tribes and within the royal family. The King has been reluctant to drop them because of his close personal attachment to both men, and because he does not want to appear to be giving in to the mutineers.

After visiting virtually every army unit in the country and meeting with tribal leaders, Husayn convened a council of male members of the royal family last weekend. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Husayn no longer seems to believe [REDACTED] that Sharif Nasir or foreign agents instigated the mutiny. As a result of the investigation into the causes of the disturbances and his own visits to the troops, Husayn realizes that the enlisted men have a number of genuine grievances and that several officers have been guilty of negligence.

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[REDACTED] enlisted men have been arrested for their part in the mutiny. The King has not indicated what kind of disciplinary action he intends to take against them, but there seems to be a good possibility that he will punish some negligent officers as well as the mutineers. This could have a salutary effect on troop morale, especially if the King does not deal too harshly with the mutineers and dismisses Bin Shakir.

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WEST GERMANY - USSR

Special Minister Egon Bahr is going to Moscow next week to prepare the ground for a visit by Chancellor Brandt this spring. He hopes to talk with General Secretary Brezhnev, among others, about several controversial issues that will figure prominently in Brandt's talks with Soviet leaders. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] these issues include:

--long-range economic cooperation in energy and other fields;

--agreement on a formula for Berlin that would break the deadlock holding up several other agreements; and

--a cut back in the East German currency exchange requirement for visitors from the Federal Republic and West Berlin.

Bahr also hopes to review the world political situation with Brezhnev, and may relate his impressions of his recent visit to Washington.

JAPAN

The abrupt replacement yesterday of Vice Foreign Minister Shinsaku Hogen reflects Prime Minister Tanaka's growing difficulty in containing criticism from within his own party on foreign policy issues.

Recent misstatements in Washington by Foreign Minister Ohira and Ambassador Tasukawa about the timing of an Imperial visit to the US triggered the dismissal. Hogen, a skilled and respected diplomat, was sacrificed to ease pressure on the foreign minister, currently under attack by Liberal Democratic rightwingers and others in the ruling party who want to force his resignation as a first step to toppling Tanaka. These elements have used such issues as the government's halting progress toward an aviation agreement with Peking and Tanaka's turbulent Southeast Asian tour to support their charges that Ohira is a blunderer. Even if Tanaka and Ohira ride out the current storm, this new evidence of party discord will hurt them as the Liberal Democrats prepare for this summer's Upper House Diet elections.

The new vice foreign minister, Fumihiko Togo, will in general approach policy matters as Hogen does, and he shares Hogen's strong commitment to the US alliance.

NOTES

Libya-Egypt: President Qadhafi offered what amounted to an apology to President Sadat yesterday in a brief speech before the Egyptian Assembly. Qadhafi praised the Egyptian military for its performance during the war and thanked the Egyptians for defending the Arab nation. Despite the conciliatory tone, Qadhafi did not endorse Egyptian policy, and called for a "closed-door airing of sincere differences," hinting that the military struggle against Israel is still uppermost in his mind.

Japan: The launching over the weekend of Japan's fifth satellite indicates that Tokyo's space program has passed a major hurdle. The success was due to a new guidance and control system on the launch vehicle, comparable to that used on US and French strategic missiles. The new control mechanism would be of value if Japan should decide to develop missiles for military use. Despite the successful launch, Japanese space technology is still in its infancy, particularly in the development of a large space booster.

EC: At a recent EC committee meeting the French suggested that the pending Multilateral Trade Negotiations, designed to liberalize world commerce, should be postponed or scaled down because of the oil crisis. Contrary to the French position, most EC participants have a strong interest in opening the trade negotiations on time, albeit to proceed cautiously. All EC states but West Germany are expected to have large trade deficits next year. Moreover, slower domestic growth and higher unemployment in Europe probably will increase protectionist sentiments and work against the goal of trade liberalization.

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